

Prairie Blazing Star: *Liatriis pycnostachya*



Cultivation: The preference is full sun and moist to mesic conditions. Established plants can tolerate some drought, but seedlings and transplants are vulnerable. The soil should consist of a rich loam or clay loam, and can contain rocky material. There is a tendency for the lower leaves to turn yellow and wither away if conditions become too dry. During the first year, this plant may develop slowly and prove temperamental, but once established it is easy to maintain. This blazing star remains reasonably erect, even when spoiled in a flower garden, but may bend around oddly if there is significant obstruction of sunlight. Habitats include moist to mesic black soil prairies, moist meadows near woodlands or rivers, limestone glades, rocky bluffs, and areas along railroads.

Plant Structure: This native perennial plant is up to 4' tall and unbranched. The central stem is fairly stout, with numerous small longitudinal ridges. It is usually covered with scattered white hairs. The leaves near the base of the plant are up to 10" long and ½" wide, but become progressively smaller as they ascend the stem. The flowerheads individually have 5-10 pink to purplish pink flowers. There is no floral scent. The blooming period occurs during late summer and lasts about a month. Afterwards, achenes form with light brown tufts of hair, which are distributed by the wind. The root system consists of corms, which occasionally form offsets near the mother plant.